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May 29, 1973

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Mr. Charles T. Robinson ^C
Attorney-at-Law
506-507 Stewart Towers
Mansfield, Ohio 44902

*fetal research, ultrasonic
funding*

Dear Mr. Robinson,

This is in reply to your letter of May 9th and further to our telephone conversation of the 22nd.

As I mentioned to you over the telephone, we are indeed very much interested in research that would enable us to achieve a better understanding of the problems of fetal development as they relate to human disease. Our approach to this has been to apply advanced methods of chemical analysis which we believe will enable us to reach a larger number of disease-conditions, and to understand the matter on a more fundamental level. This is not to demean the important work that others are doing with respect to visualizing the fetus either by a probe that amounts to a flexible telescope, or by the use of ultrasonics.

The analytical devices that we have been developing, the gas chromatograph, the mass spectrometer, and both automated under computer control, can be regarded as spill-overs from space technology. Indeed, we have been supported by NASA for somewhat different objectives over the past decade, but as you know the funding for this agency has been declining rapidly and its remaining budget is now concentrated almost entirely on mission-oriented work directly connected with skylab and other manned missions. Meanwhile we have been seeking support from the National Institutes of Health, as embodied in the draft proposal that I am enclosing, but as you know health research is also in a bad way in the federal budget. We really have very little hope of achieving funding for more than a fraction of our ongoing efforts, if at all, in the present fiscal climate. For these reasons I would indeed be most grateful for any suggestions you may be able to make as to private sources of support for this line of work.

The details of these analytical procedures are rather intricate and I intend to be drafting a version more comprehensible for the general reader sometime during this summer. However, I did not wish to delay sending you this material by way of an introduction, and I have marked out some sections that may be of special interest to you.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

his query, offered funding

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JL/rr
enclosure